



South Central District Health

Keeping your family & community healthy
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District Health Honors Local Health Heroes

As part of celebrating National Public Health Month in April, South Central District Health announced today that a children's advocate, a group of students working on tobacco cessation activities, two podiatrists who work on diabetes issues, and a child care owner are being honored as 2007 Health Heroes.

The 2007 Health Heroes Awards were presented today during the South Central District Board of Health meeting in Twin Falls. Nominations were submitted by the community, and selection of Linda Petersen, Burley area Child Protection Team member; the Magic Valley Tobacco Free Coalition; Dr. Randy Wraalstad and Dr. Craig Holman, Twin Falls area podiatrists; and the Lynn Lucere of the White Rabbit Child Care Center in Bellevue was based on the breadth of their service and their on-going commitment to improving the health of south central Idaho residents.

Winner of the award for Adult Health Hero was Linda Petersen of Burley. Petersen has been an asset to the children of the Mini-Cassia community for many years. She is the driving force behind the Mini-Cassia Child Protection Team, a group that advocates for the welfare of children. She is dedicated to helping children, teenage mothers, and families have a better, safer life through various educational activities and mentor programs.

"Ms. Petersen carries out these activities with a smile and kind words for everyone," said Buck Ward, Chairman of the Board of Health. "She represents the true spirit of volunteerism."

The Magic Valley Tobacco Free Coalition was selected as the 2007 Youth Health Hero. This group of dynamic Twin Falls High School students has been actively involved in many tobacco cessation activities over the years, including several major projects in 2006. During 2006, the group made anti-smoking presentations to nearly 300 students, lobbied state legislators to encourage them to pass a bill to make bowling alleys in Idaho smoke free, and established a mall display of 1,200 shoes to represent the number people who die every day across America from tobacco-related illness. The group was recently named a finalist in the national Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids.

“Thank you to the members of MVTFC for your diligent work to get Idahoans to kick the tobacco habit,” said Ward. “You are an inspiration to your peers and all Idahoans.”

Winner of the Corporate Health Hero awards included Dr. Craig Holman and Dr. Randy Wraalstad, Twin Falls podiatrists, and Lynn Lucere, owner of the White Rabbit Child Care Center in Bellevue.

Over the last several years, Drs. Holman and Wraalstad have been very involved in the Magic Valley Diabetes Coalition foot activities. Both doctors volunteer many hours to conduct free foot exam clinics for people with diabetes. They also conduct foot exam training for CSI nursing students and then supervise those students at foot clinics. The doctors have recently become involved with the diabetes “Head to Toe” initiative in which diabetic patients can receive a foot exam, dilated eye screening, nutrition education, and in the fall, a flu shot, all at one location. Their dedication is helping improve the lives of people with diabetes.

“The doctors’ dedication to education and training is helping improve the lives of people with diabetes,” said Ward. “Thank you both for your tireless work on behalf of people with diabetes.”

Also named Corporate Health Hero was Lynn Lucere of Bellevue. When she was informed by environmental authorities that lab tests showed high levels of arsenic in the soil around her child care facility, she took action to protect the children in her care. With guidance from state agencies, Lucere worked to reduce the arsenic levels at her own expense. The project was a major undertaking -- she had the sand in the boxes replaced, the gravel driveway paved, the lawn soil replaced with clean soil, and used weed cloth and bark to cover a large area of the back yard.

“Lynn turned a bad situation into a ‘win-win’ for the children in her care and her business,” said Ward. “Her dedication to improving the environment is an inspiration for all of us.”

This is the ninth year District Health has recognized the contributions made by area individuals and groups to the health of south central Idaho residents. Award recipients in 2006 included Adult Health Hero Ann Bybee from Jerome, who has been actively involved with the Magic Valley Diabetes Coalition for several years. Two elementary school walking programs were selected as the 2006 Youth Health Heroes: Vicki Leach and the Filer Elementary School 4th Graders and Jenny Lukes and Valley Elementary School K-5 students and teachers shared the award to honor their innovative walking programs. Winner of the 2006 Corporate Health Hero award was the College of Southern Idaho. CSI was nominated for its consistent work to protect, promote, and enhance the health of citizens in south central Idaho.

Award recipients in 2005 included Adult Health Hero Dr. Cynthia Unger, D.D.S., from Hailey, who has led the charge for several years to make sure that elementary school children in Blaine County, specifically 1st and 2nd graders, have dental screenings free of charge at school. Selected as the 2005 Youth Health Heroes were the Kimberly High School Advanced Health Class and their teacher, Jan Hall.

The Advanced Health Class students raised \$2,000 to purchase milk vending machines for the Kimberly High School and Middle Schools to provide an alternative to soda. Winner of the 2005 Corporate Health Hero award was The Body Works gym and fitness club in Buhl, owned by Tracy Hulse and Joan Hurlock. The Body Works is a health-haven to over 200 patrons, including people from Buhl, Castleford, and Filer.

Award recipients in 2004 included Adult Health Hero Ketchum attorney Reginald “Reggie” Reeves who helps link people with limited resources to the health services they need. The Mini-Cassia HealthNet Coalition was named the Youth Health Hero for their numerous contributions to the communities of Burley and Rupert over the past several years. And, the Corporate Health Hero Award went to the Main Motion Dance and Fitness Studio in Oakley, owned by sisters Annalee Elquist and Tasha Payton, which offers a wide variety of exercise classes in the rural town.

Award recipients in 2003 included Adult Health Hero Gooding Police Chief Paul Brown who worked to improve the safety and health of the residents of Gooding. The Youth Health Hero Award in 2003 went to the Blaine County Teen Advisory Council (BC TAC). And the 2003 Corporate Health Hero was the Twin Falls Times-News, selected for its promotion and support of youth as the community’s most valuable resource.

Honorees in 2002 included Adult Health Hero Sherri Massie, an HIV-positive woman who works to inform her community about HIV prevention; Youth Health Hero Jeremy Ricondo, a Minico High School student who was the first youth member of the Rupert City Council; and the Twin Falls Lions Club, selected as the Corporate Health Hero for their work to help people receive the vision care they would otherwise not be able to afford.

Honorees in 2001 included Adult Health Hero Dr. David McClusky, long-time Twin Falls physician and surgeon; Youth Health Hero Shaylee O’Connor of Buhl, for her role in the Magic Valley Tobacco Free Coalition; and Corporate Health Hero KMVT Television, for their support of the Youth Asset Building Initiative by providing production and airtime for youth-generated public service announcements. Award winners in 2000 included Jan Mittleider, Associate Professor of Physical Education and Wellness Coordinator at CSI, and Lauri Bailey and her students at the Cassia County Education Center in Burley. In 1999, Con Paulos and Subway Sandwiches received the award for providing healthy fast food alternatives.

Side Bar

What Does South Central District Health Do in Your Community?

- **Keep you safe from every day health threats.** District Health guards the safety of the tap water you drink, the restaurant food you eat, and the clean air you breathe, as well as responding quickly to health emergencies and preventing disease.

- **Ensure the health of entire towns, cities, and counties.** When a contagious disease or epidemic threatens your community, District Health joins forces with other agencies, organizations, schools, businesses, and the media to quickly stop it from spreading.
- **Educate you and your neighbors about good health.** District Health provides information to help you make healthy decisions every day, like exercising more, eating right, quitting smoking, and washing your hands to keep you from spreading illness.
- **Keep everyone healthy.** District Health makes sure that everyone – no matter who they are – has access to preventive care they need to help maintain their health.

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